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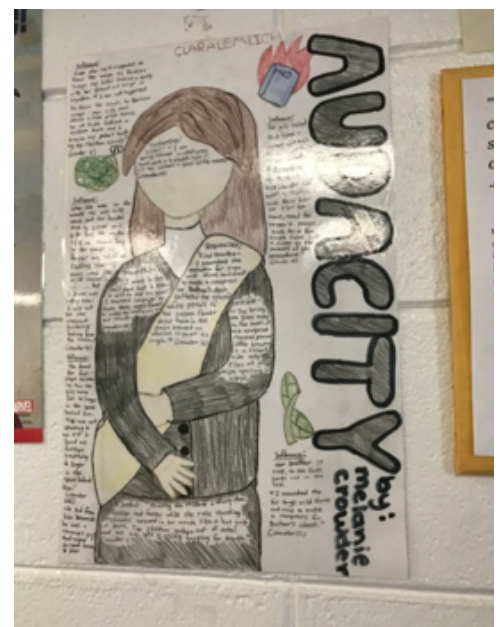
East Samford School
Auburn, AL

The Book Love Foundation Grant allowed me to do more than I ever imagined in the classroom with my readers! I teach 7th Grade and have since I began teaching eight years ago. When I began teaching, I was asked to teach whole class novels and a classroom library was not a major emphasis in secondary schools. I can laugh about it now, but my first year, my classroom library consisted of a row of books across the top of a table in the back of the classroom. Thankfully, we had a large school library, but I learned quickly that a classroom library changes the game!



In my second year of teaching, my principal gave me permission to stop teaching whole class novels and to focus on more choice reading. I took that permission and began to build. On a teacher's salary, this growth was slow, but powerful. I noticed students gravitating toward the new books. They began asking me about titles they were interested in. When I learned about the Book Love Grant, I knew I had to take a shot! Together with my colleague at the time, Kristina Passi, we wrote our application, sprinkled some fairy dust, and submitted it. I will never forget answering the phone and hearing Penny Kittle introduce herself.

With the amazing influx of titles given to us by the Book Love Foundation, we were able to make the full shift into a reading workshop environment. Students are so much more engaged and my library has continued to grow. Having access to such a wide range of genres and titles makes all the difference for struggling readers. Being able to walk a student around your shelves and show them things that may interest them is so much better than sending



them to the school library and hoping for the best. Students thrive on your interest and stamp of approval. I've learned over and over again that being a strong resource for my students, as far as books go, is the best thing I can do for them. I read everything. I talk about books all the time. Parents tell me over and over that their child stopped reading in sixth grade and they are shocked that they are now reading again. Book access makes all the difference!